

# Meir Ezra: When in Doubt, Communicate!

You may remember being told as a child, "Keep quiet!" "Children should be seen, not heard," and "You talk too much." You were a "good" kid if you kept quiet. However, being quiet when you are little causes big problems later in life.

As an adult, you may have been punished for communicating. For example, if you admit you committed a crime and are sorry about it, no one cares. You still go to jail. If you honestly tell your spouse you are thinking about an affair, your marriage suffers if your spouse is not very understanding. If you tell someone you feel a little crazy, who knows what might happen. So you learn to keep your mouth shut.



However, businesses fail when managers do not talk to employees or employees do not talk to customers. Everyone mistakenly believes telepathy is working. "I thought you knew I was unhappy with your performance." "You should have known I was overworked."

Marriages are ruined by poor communication. Rather than openly discuss sex, money, body problems or whatever, couples hint about their concerns or simply say nothing. But without support and understanding from your primary teammate, you do not go as far. In fact, a bad marriage can ruin everything in your life. Both parties in a successful marriage are able to give and receive communication from their spouse on any subject.

Life is miserable if you have no one to openly communicate with. Friendships are based on communication. The lack of friends or a spouse to communicate with often leads to mental problems.

So the first communication skill you need is to get out there and talk.

Unfortunately, on some topics, you've learned to watch what you say, to keep it under your hat, to zip it up.

"So that is the basic lesson that anybody learns in this universe. They learn to keep their mouth shut, and it's the wrong lesson. When in doubt, talk. When in doubt, communicate." — L. Ron Hubbard

Whenever you have doubts about something, COMMUNICATE! Talk, talk, talk until the problem resolves. When you feel stress, disagreement or resistance between you and someone near you, the wrong thing to do is ignore the problem. Instead, start communicating.

When you know you should say something, say it! For example, an employee knows another employee is embezzling money and so says something to the employee and/or boss. A doctor knows he must talk to a patient about the patient's rude behavior to the office staff. An employer knows she must discuss poor performance issues with some employees.

Take the bull by the horns. Move ahead in life. Spit it out.

If you're worried about the consequences of saying something, you can ask first. Examples:

"Lisa, I want to say something about your driving to help keep you out of accidents, but I don't want to upset you. Can I tell you what I think or should I keep my mouth shut?"

"Boss, should I tell you if I think you are giving me bad advice?"

"John, our marriage means so much to me I don't want to say anything that would jeopardize it. But I have done something wrong and I'm sorry I did it. I think it would be good for our relationship if I told you. Don't you think it's best if we are 100% honest with each other?"

"Can you listen to something unfortunate I have to say and remain calm? Are you ready?"

In the long run, you are always better off by communicating. Take responsibility and talk. Staying silent solves nothing.

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